



NEWS RELEASE

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UNIT EARNS ARMY HONOR

By Amanda Kim Stairrett
Staff writer

The 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor, earned distinction recently for having one of the best maintenance programs in the U.S. Army.

The battalion was named runner-up in the large Modified Table of Organization and Equipment category in the Army's annual Maintenance Excellence Awards. The 5th Battalion, 52nd Air Defense Artillery, at Fort Bliss, Texas, won in that category.

Capt. Paul E. Deegan, battalion motor officer, and Sgt. 1st Class Dion G. Burch, who served as Company C maintenance supervisor while the battalion was stationed in Iraq, will travel to Alexandria, Va., May 18 to accept the award.

The battalion received the award based on accomplishments achieved during its yearlong deployment in Iraq. Deegan said the application was submitted in October.

Winning the award is a fairly big deal, Deegan said, and the Soldiers were pleased that their accomplishments were recognized.

"My motivation was to recognize the NCOs (noncommissioned officers) and Soldiers in the battalion because they really got the work done," Deegan said. "They did an outstanding job while we were there."

Burch said it was a great honor to be selected because a lot of time and energy went into the project. This was the second time he has been included in a Maintenance Excellence Award. He was in the 1st Battalion, 81st Armor, at Fort Knox, Ky., which won the award several times.

"For the battalion (1st Bn., 34th Armor), it shows the teamwork, determination and sweat that were put into accomplishing this," he said.

The Maintenance Excellence Award covers all aspects of unit maintenance, including systems for ordering parts, annual and semi-annual vehicle services plans, operations

readiness rates, vehicle maintenance, weapons maintenance and other non-maintenance-related quality of life issues for Soldiers in the maintenance platoon.

Those issues include self-help programs, personnel recognition programs, community projects, communications, humanitarian projects and support to families.

The award's application packet was compiled in Iraq and submitted to the battalion's Iraq headquarters, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division. A packet also was submitted to the battalion's regular headquarters at Fort Riley. The application sent to Fort Riley was the one that advanced to III Corps, FORSCOM and eventually to Department of the Army.

Deegan, who returned from Iraq Jan. 19, learned in mid-April that the battalion won runner-up honors.

The 2nd Bn., 34th Armor, vehicle fleet in Iraq consisted of more than 40 M1A1 Abrams tanks, about five M1064A3 mortar tracks, about 15 M113A2 Armored Personnel Carriers, about 55 M1114 "Humvees" and about 150 support wheeled vehicles.